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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CHISINAU 000377

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [MD](#)
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR MARK TKACIUK PREFERS
COMPROMISE TO THE "GOLDEN VOTE"

Classified by: Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Ref A: Chisinau 375

¶1. (C) Summary: In a May 18 meeting with the Ambassador, Presidential Advisor Mark Tkaciuk argued that Moldova has emerged from each of its previous political crises as a stronger state. He believed that cutting a deal to find the "golden vote" would be possible, but would leave the country divided, with a weaker democracy. It would be far better to reach a political consensus based on principles and power-sharing. There were already some contacts with Urechean and his party and Tkaciuk had been trying to call Filat to initiate a discussion. Tkaciuk blamed Romania for trying to force a repeat round of parliamentary elections. End Summary

Crisis Makes Us Stronger

¶2. (C) In a May 18 meeting Mark Tkaciuk explained to the Ambassador (accompanied by Pol/Econ Chief) that in Moldova's recent history, each round of crisis had made the country stronger. He cited the situation in 2000 which had resulted in the creation of a parliamentary regime. In response to the Party of Communists' (PCRM) conflict with Iurie Rosca in 2002, Moldova had entered a phase of more active cooperation with European institutions, particularly the Council of Europe. As a result, said Tkaciuk, Moldova adopted the Law on Public Broadcasting, held a number of roundtables with the participation of both opposition and GOM authorities, and held various meetings between the authorities and NGOs.

¶3. (C) In 2005, an apparently unsolvable conflict emerged following parliamentary elections that left the PCRM short of votes needed to elect a president. With the exception of Ghimpu and Chirtoaca, all the other players were the same as now. The key difference in 2005 was that the opposition was then supported by Russia. The conflict in 2005 was easier for the PCRM, because they knew who their candidate for president would be, but was more difficult for the opposition. Tkaciuk said that he had conducted negotiations with the key opposition leaders (Iurie Rosca, Oleg Serebrian and Dumitry Diacov). In 2005, they could have just cut a deal ("Soviet style") by offering a government post to Serebrian, but instead they discussed principles and worked out a settlement that brought Rosca into the Parliament. Of the agreements reached in 2005, Tkaciuk said that they had implemented all principles except

two: (1) the GOM had not yet completed the promised reform of the Prosecutor's office, and (2) though the Parliament implemented the change of the threshold from six to four percent, it had set it back again.

Consensus Trumps "Golden Vote Deal"

14. (C) Tkaciuk suggested that the first option to elect the PCRM's presidential candidate would be a "golden vote deal" (the one MP needed to give the PCRM the 61 needed to elect a president), but that a far better approach would be to reach a political consensus regarding principles. The deal option was the wrong way to elect a president, he continued, as it would continue the majority party's cold war with the opposition, resulting in a weaker democracy. Moldova could then spend the next four years arguing about whether elections were fraudulent and whether or not the April 7 demonstrations and riots were really a coup d'etat.

15. (C) Far better, continued Tkaciuk, would be a consensus in the name of principles. Consensus would give the opposition access to key positions in the government to oversee human rights, special services and federal reform. Tkaciuk said he could theoretically assume what the opposition's demands to reach consensus would be (such as reform of the media), but noted that he had not

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yet received any formal proposals from his opposition colleagues. The Ambassador noted that Filat had made a public statement listing six conditions for negotiating, but Tkaciuk dismissed this, saying that the opposition had not yet made any formal proposal directly to the PCRM.

16. (C) Tkaciuk said that he was ready to reach an understanding with the opposition, but that so far the PCRM had not succeeded. Urechean kept postponing meetings and, charged Tkaciuk, was behaving like someone trying to cut a "golden vote deal" rather than as a leader trying to reach a political consensus. Thus far, Urechean preferred to discuss these issues with other representatives of the PCRM, rather than with Tkaciuk himself. Tkaciuk continued by charging that Filat did not know what he was doing. Tkaciuk had tried to call him twice on the previous day (May 17) in order to have a discussion.

17. (C) Tkaciuk did not expect to reach this consensus in time for the May 20 vote, but was hopeful that this could be done by the second round of presidential voting. (Note: With all 41 opposition MPs boycotting the May 20 presidential vote, the PCRM candidate, acting PM Greceanii, received all 60 PCRM votes, one short of the the 61 needed. If a second try, scheduled for May 28, fails, Parliament will be dissolved and a nationwide parliamentary election must be held on or before Sunday, July 12. End note.) However, he noted, if they did not find the opportunity for consensus, they would pursue the "golden vote deal." This would allow the GOM to win in the short term, but would destroy opposition solidarity. Thus, the PCRM would strategically lose the opportunity to modernize and to fix the image of Moldova.

Romania Supports Early Parliamentary Elections

¶8. (C) Tkaciuk referred to Filat's statements in Parliament that he favored repeating parliamentary elections. Tkaciuk believed that the opposition's support for repeat elections had been strengthened by Romanian President Basescu's recent statements. While claiming not to be a "Romania-phobe," Tkaciuk complained that Basescu's statements demonstrated a rejection of Moldovan statehood. He said that the next day all Romanian media quoted statements from experts that "the time had come to call things by their proper names, i.e. that Romania wanted reintegration with Moldova." Tkaciuk claimed that Romania wanted early elections in Moldova. He said that the outcome would be the same, but that the quality of the elections would be bad. He feared that early elections would lead to a hardening of the two camps' positions that would destroy Moldova's democratic process.

Projected Constitutional Amendments

¶9. (C) In separate comments to Pol/Econ Chief after the meeting, Tkaciuk shed further light on comments we had heard from President Voronin (ref A) about future amendments to the constitution. Tkaciuk confirmed that the new Speaker planned to introduce the idea of amending the constitution in order to create a stronger Parliament and a true parliamentary system. The position of Prime Minister would be strengthened at the expense of the Presidency. Tkaciuk said that the goal would be to have the Presidential post become a largely ceremonial one, with much less responsibility for day-to-day running of the government than the position currently held.

¶10. (C) Comment: Tkaciuk is usually reported to be the strategic analyst behind the Voronin machine. As Tkaciuk was reputed to be a strong supporter of Lupu, we were initially surprised when Grecianii's name surfaced instead as the PCRM's presidential candidate. The Tkaciuk-Voronin plan to weaken the presidency helps explain this move. The first challenge facing the PCRM remains getting their presidential candidate

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elected. Tkaciuk showed good strategic thinking in his assessment that reaching a political deal with the opposition would be better than the "golden vote deal." As both Tkaciuk and Voronin immediately mentioned Urechean when discussing the idea of reaching an understanding with one of the political parties, we can assume that they have grounds for believing the Our Moldova Alliance (AMN) will come over to the PCRM side. Tkaciuk commented that he did not expect to remain as an MP, which means he expects to be offered either a ministerial or ambassadorial post.

CHAUDHRY